

Camacho, Rudy

From: Travis Mann <tmann1@uw.edu>
Sent: Sunday, November 01, 2015 11:41 PM
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Subject: Comment For Project #3020845

Dear Department of Planning and Development:

My name is Travis Mann and I am a law student at the University of Washington. I am writing to you as an individual who has personally been impacted by the criminal justice system as well as an individual who has worked with numerous others personally impacted by our justice system, both as victims and perpetrators. I have spent a good deal of time in prisons and jails throughout the state of Washington, as well as the current juvenile detention center.

I am writing today to ask for you to DENY the Master Use Permit for Project #3020845. I do not believe SEPA Environmental Determination should be approved for the Children and Family Justice Center. The county should not be incarcerating children on a site that is contaminated with dry cleaning materials. I am opposed to the construction of the new Children and Family Justice Center.

The City of Seattle cannot have a goal or vision of zero-use of juvenile detention while giving the County authorization or permission to build a new juvenile detention center. Our permitting process should reflect that we are now a CITY that is aspiring to be detention free. The Department of Planning and Development should not approve King County building a facility that targets youth of color, is environmentally unsafe, destroys lives, and does not make us safer. Please DENY all permits for project #3020845.

You may have received comments from lawyers and judges as a result of King County Bar Association's last-minute push for support from, arguably, those least affected by the new youth jail. On Friday, October 29, the King County Bar Association sent an email to its members rallying support of the \$210 million construction of a new youth jail in Seattle (see: http://www.kcba.org/pdf/action_alert_cfjc_103015.pdf). Their "call to action" is misleading and disturbing. They characterized the opposition to this project as a "small, but vocal group of opponents of incarceration." Are members of KCBA not also opponents of incarceration of our youth? We are being trained as future lawyers during a time where the majority, including police chiefs, legislators at all levels and presidential candidates are advocating for alternatives to incarceration. To describe the group of opponents to the jail as small but vocal group is not only patronizing, but it is offensive and out of touch. Opposition to the new youth jail stems from community members who are most impacted by the creation of it. Inferring that these community members' voices represent a small minority is a serious misstep by the King County Bar Association.

Let us not forget that opposition to this project has never been small in number. Even as a deceptively worded bill, 46% of King County voters opposed it. After recognizing what the bill entailed (a continued effort to incarcerate youth rather than provide services and support to those who need it most), the contingent of opposition has grown even larger. Multiple youth advocate organizations, legal organizations, community members, and concerned citizens are fighting against the execution of this destructive bill. If anything, KCBA is representing a minority viewpoint, one that dismisses the needs of actual stakeholders in the project and instead projects the desires of those benefitting from the caging of our youth.

I am disturbed that this association of lawyers, which claims to be invested in improving the community's access to justice, would deceptively lobby its members to support a plan that brings about injustice to the very same community. The message that KCBA's call to action sends is disheartening. As future lawyers, judges, policymakers, legislators, leaders and potential members of the King County Bar Association, we should not be encouraged to ignore the voices of those most impacted by our work. *The community should not be ignored.*

The KCBA does not state how it arrived to its official position on this political issue, nor do they mention how the public was initially misinformed about the implications of this project. The proposed \$210 million investment in the new juvenile detention center will not benefit children; The vast majority of the tax dollars will be used to build more comfortable courtrooms and quarters for judges and lawyers. To imply, as the County has done, that this investment will lead to a more respectful place for families, is appalling and tone-deaf. Next week, King County will ask citizens to vote on another levy for pre-K education. For that project they are asking for about \$70 million in taxpayer money. When our government is more interested in investing to detain children than to educate them, then we as a society have been failed. This was a thoughtless promotion of an oppressive and harmful system that targets youth of color at an incredibly disproportionate rate.

Please do not be on the wrong side of history when deciding whether to approve this Master Use Permit.

Sincerely,

Travis Mann
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